



US008875449B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Calgaro et al.

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 8,875,449 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent:** **Nov. 4, 2014**

(54) **CLOSURE SYSTEM FOR MEMORIAL PRODUCT**

USPC 52/128, 133, 134, 137, 474, 489.2,
52/506.03, 506.09, 772, 778, 779
See application file for complete search history.

(71) Applicant: **Cold Spring Granite**, Cold Spring, MN (US)

(56) **References Cited**

(72) Inventors: **James Daniel Calgaro**, Avon, MN (US);
Daniel A. Holthaus, Richmond, MN (US)

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

(73) Assignee: **Cold Spring Granite Company**, Cold Springs, MN (US)

2,257,598 A * 9/1941 Frease 52/481.1
3,319,983 A 5/1967 Zibell
3,561,182 A 2/1971 Madl, Jr.

(Continued)

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

(21) Appl. No.: **13/840,323**

JP 2003-74137 3/2003
KR 10-2009-0043801 5/2009
KR 10-0987700 B1 10/2010
WO WO 2012/033499 A1 3/2012

(22) Filed: **Mar. 15, 2013**

Primary Examiner — Charles A Fox
Assistant Examiner — Patrick Maestri

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2014/0109493 A1 Apr. 24, 2014

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Merchant & Gould, P.C.

Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 61/704,190, filed on Sep. 21, 2012.

(57) **ABSTRACT**

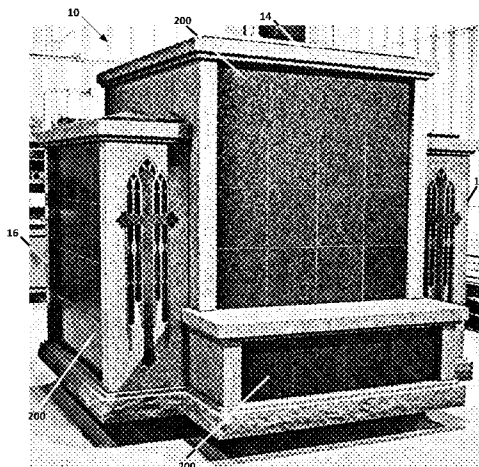
(51) **Int. Cl.**
E04H 13/00 (2006.01)
E06B 5/00 (2006.01)

A closure system for a memorial product, such as a columbarium, is disclosed. In one embodiment, the closure system is configured to be mounted to a niche compartment such that an opening of the niche compartment is covered. In one embodiment, the closure system includes a face plate hanger and a face plate. The face plate hanger may include first and second rails that are generally directed towards each other. The face plate may be provided with a first channel constructed to receive the first rail and a second channel constructed to receive the second rail. The face plate hanger may also include a cover panel that is configured to cover the niche opening. A columbarium is also disclosed in which a cabinet structure is provided that defines a plurality of niche compartments wherein each of the compartments has an opening that is covered by the above described closure system.

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC **E04H 13/006** (2013.01); **E06B 5/00** (2013.01); **E04H 13/00** (2013.01)
USPC **52/137**; 52/134; 52/489.2; 52/778; 52/779

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC E04B 2/56; E04B 2/72; E04B 2/74; E06B 5/00; E04H 13/00; E04H 13/006; E04H 13/008; E04C 2/00; E04F 13/00

27 Claims, 16 Drawing Sheets



(56)

References Cited

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

3,705,002 A 12/1972 Varlonga
3,786,605 A 1/1974 Winfrey
3,888,055 A 6/1975 Gallo
4,899,508 A 2/1990 Biebuyck

5,195,812 A 3/1993 Eickhof
5,860,257 A * 1/1999 Gerhafer et al. 52/235
6,347,439 B1 * 2/2002 Bach Lahor 27/1
7,308,740 B2 12/2007 Roberts
8,122,650 B2 * 2/2012 Eickhof 52/134
8,245,457 B2 8/2012 Eickhof

* cited by examiner

FIG. 1

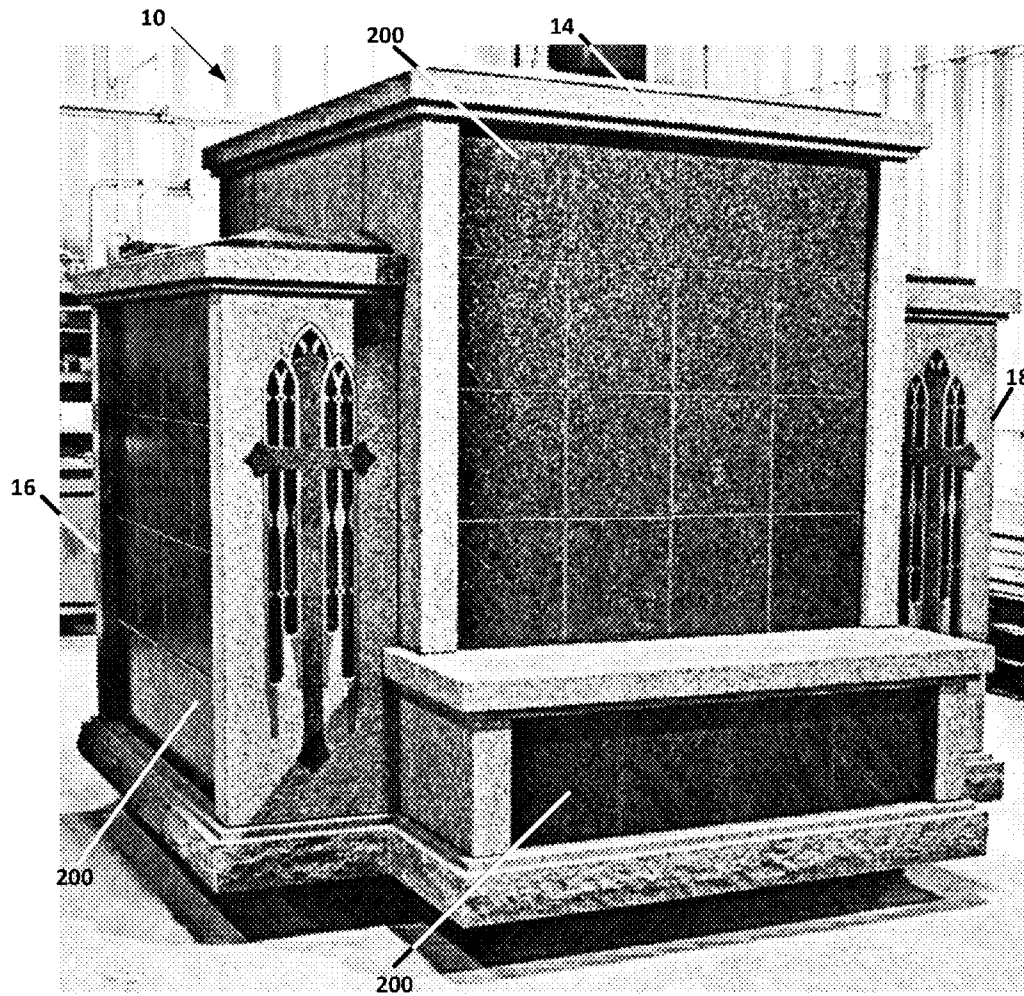


FIG. 2

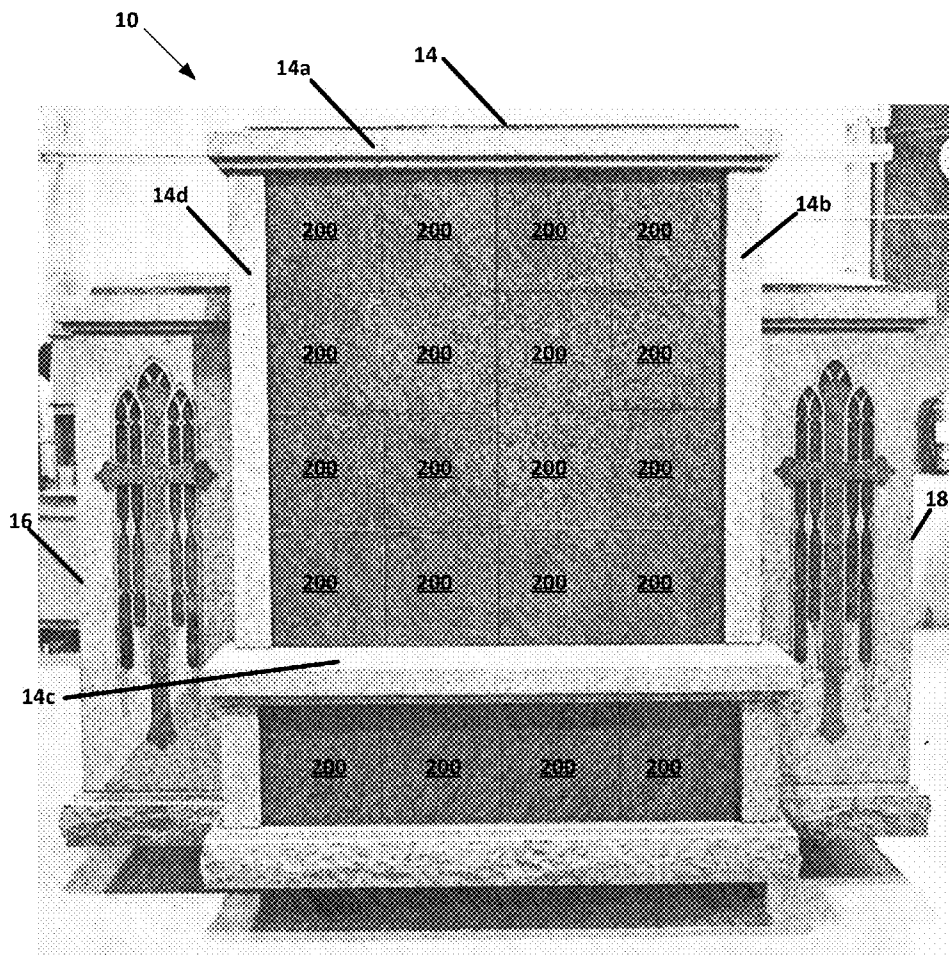


FIG. 3

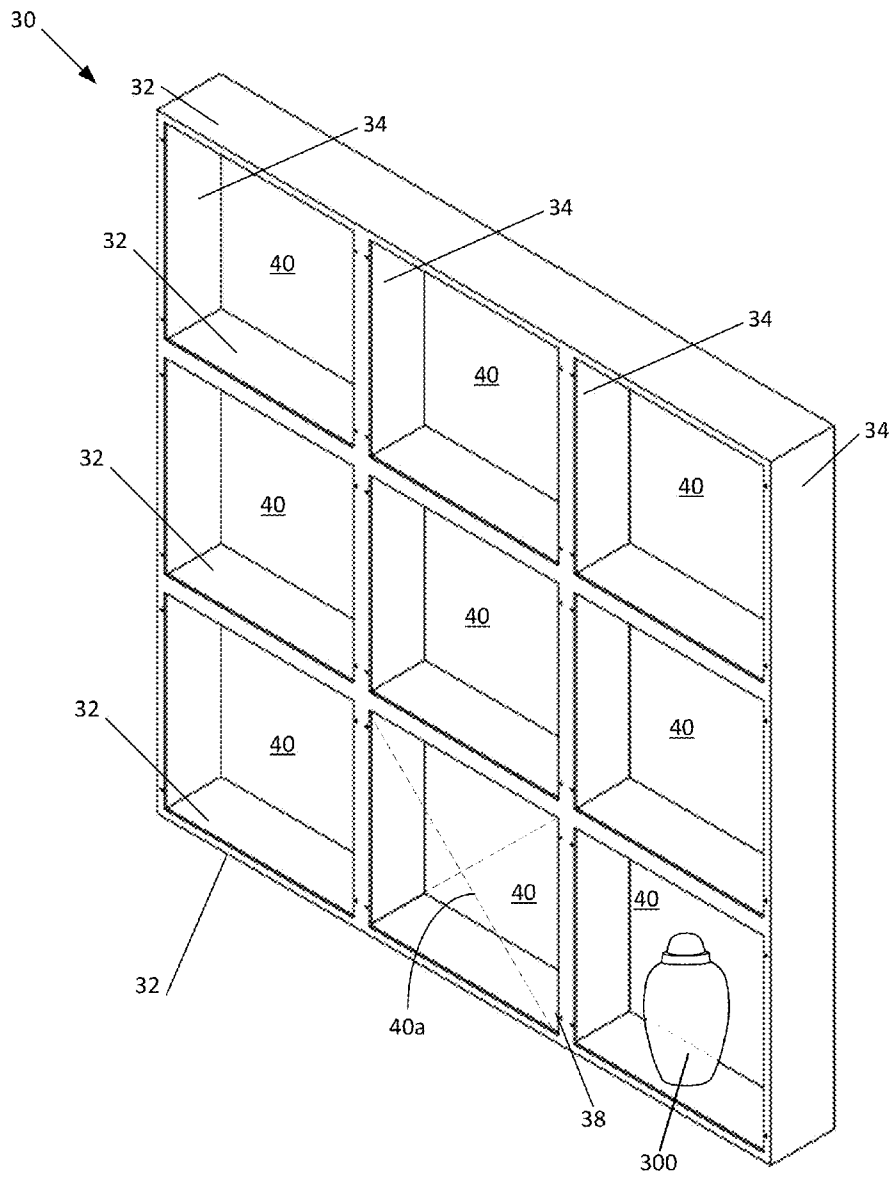


FIG. 4

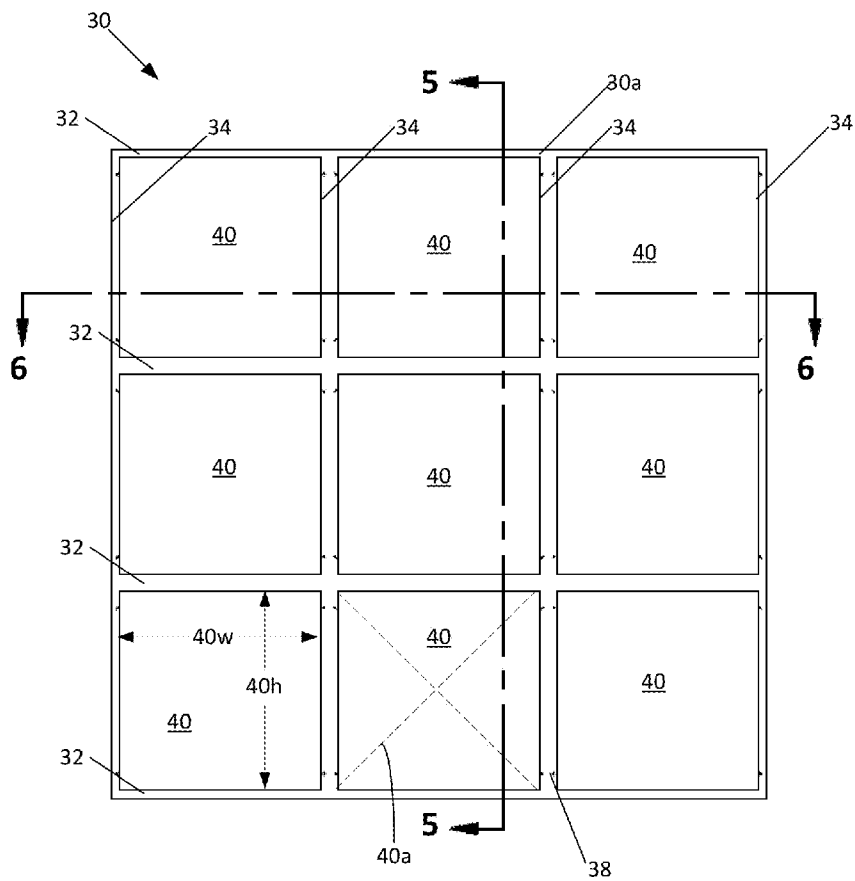


FIG. 5

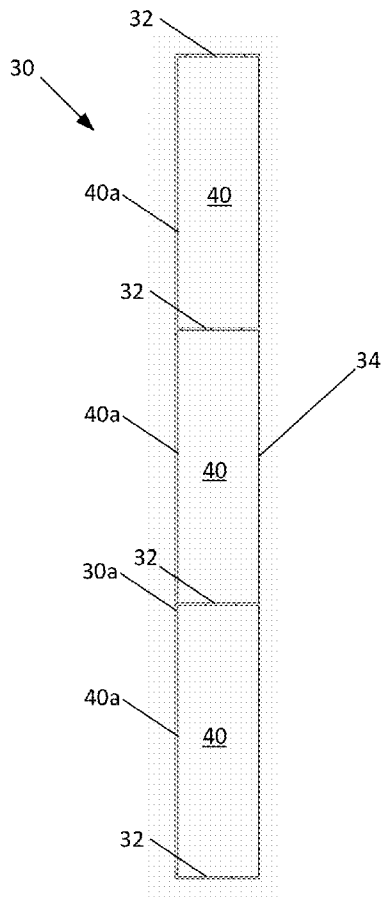


FIG. 6

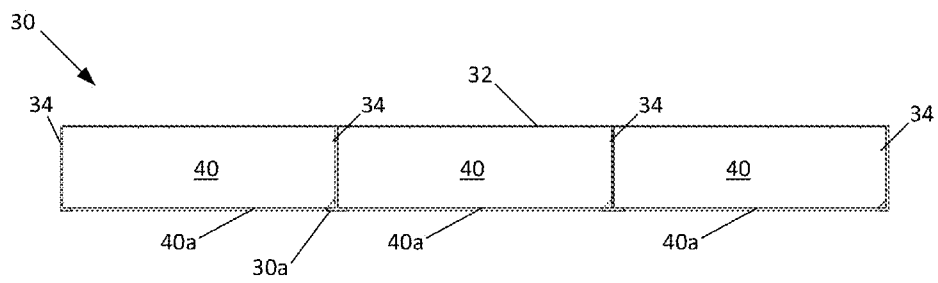


FIG. 7

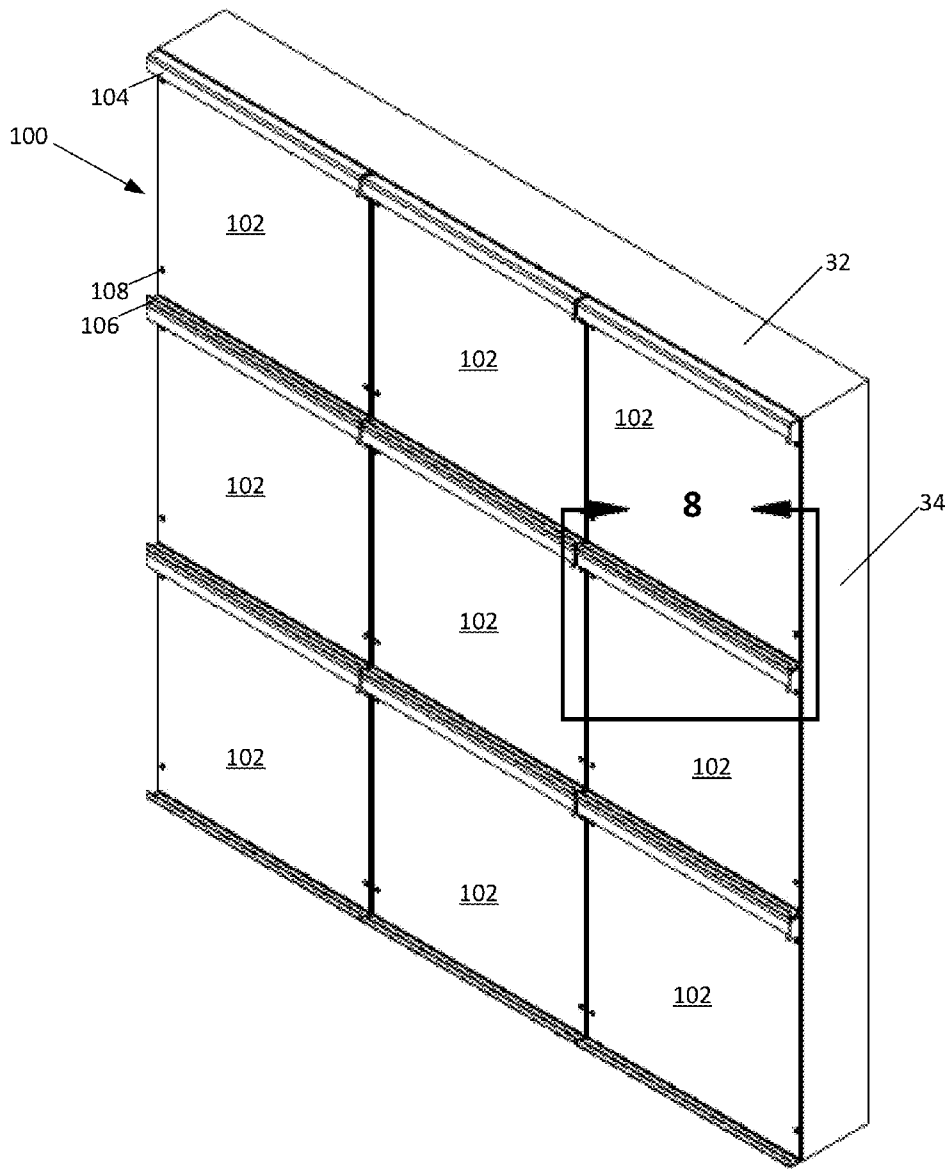


FIG. 8

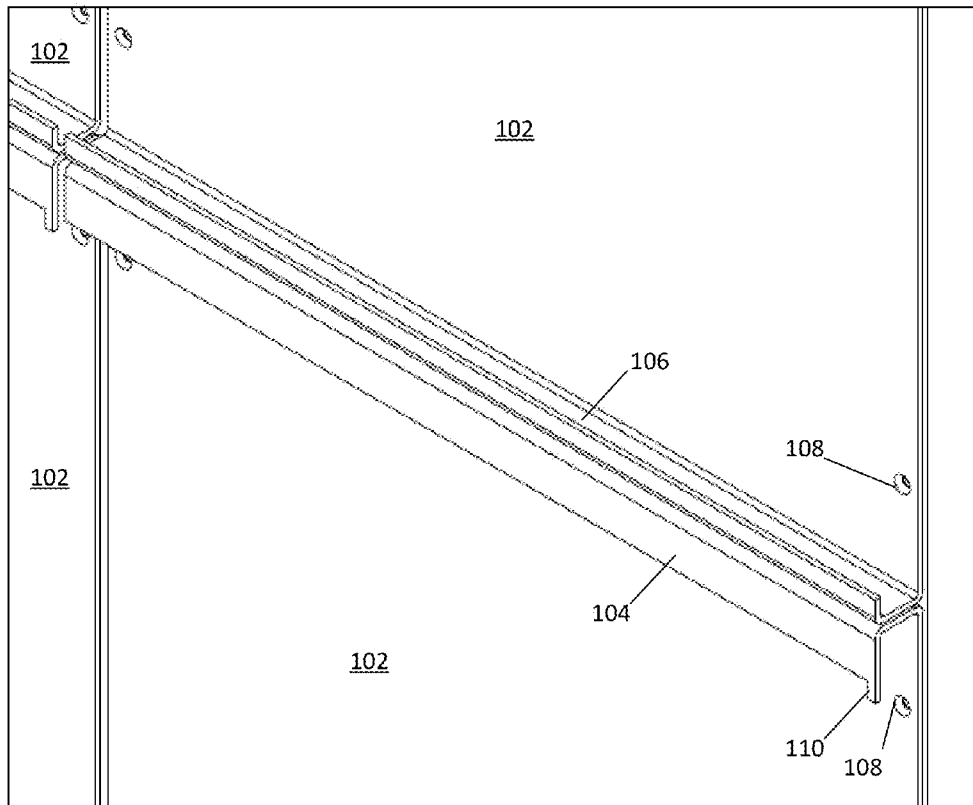


FIG. 9

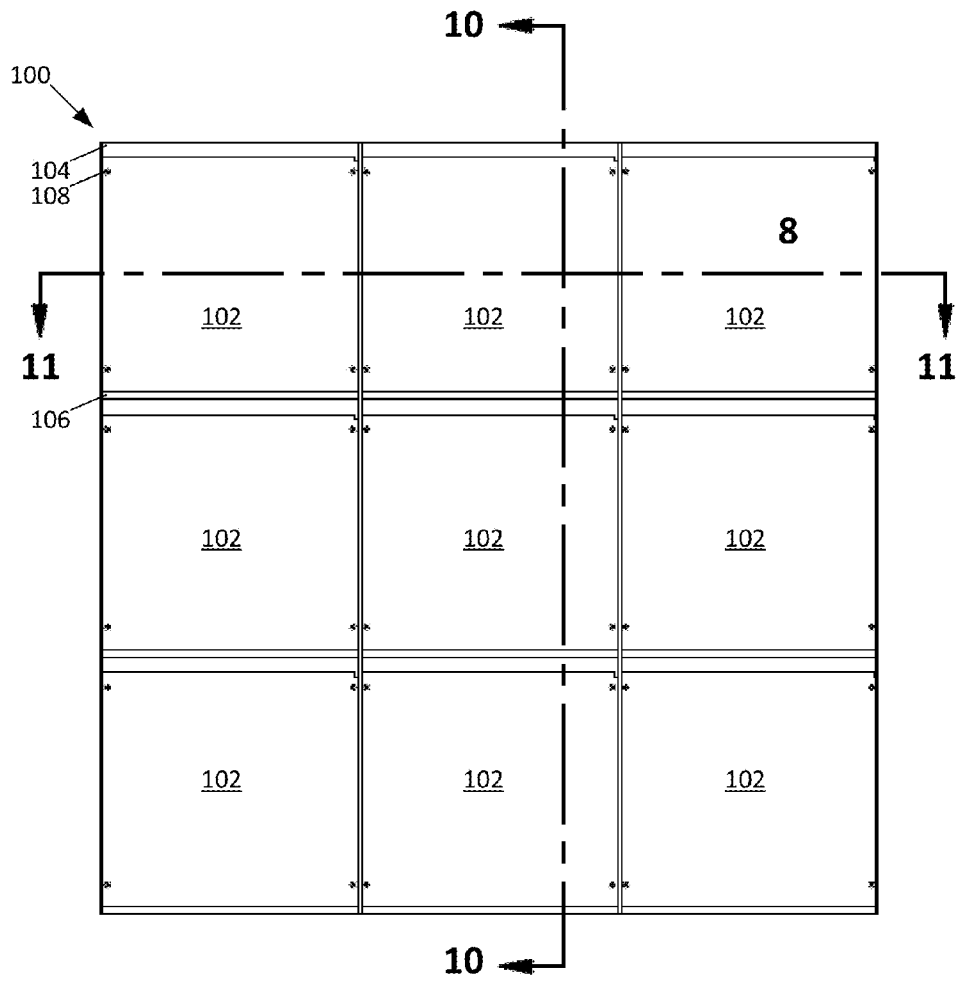


FIG. 10

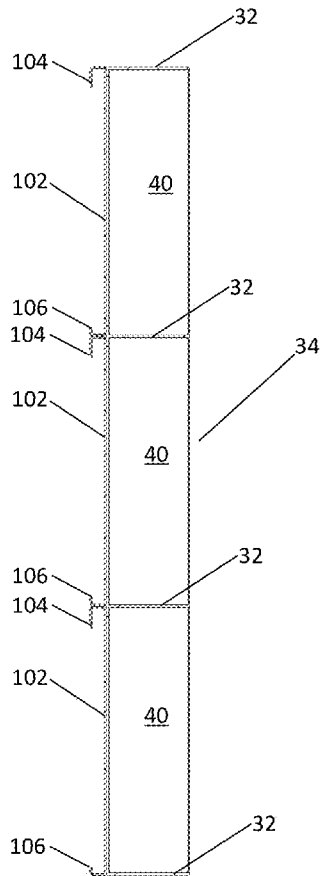


FIG. 11

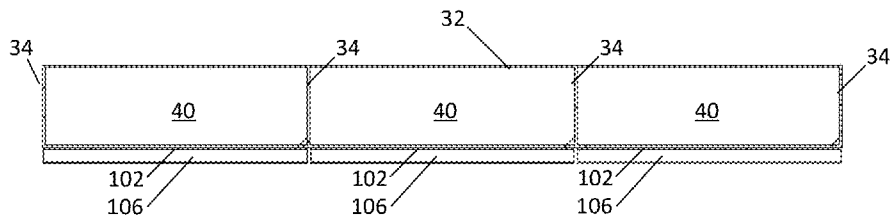


FIG. 12

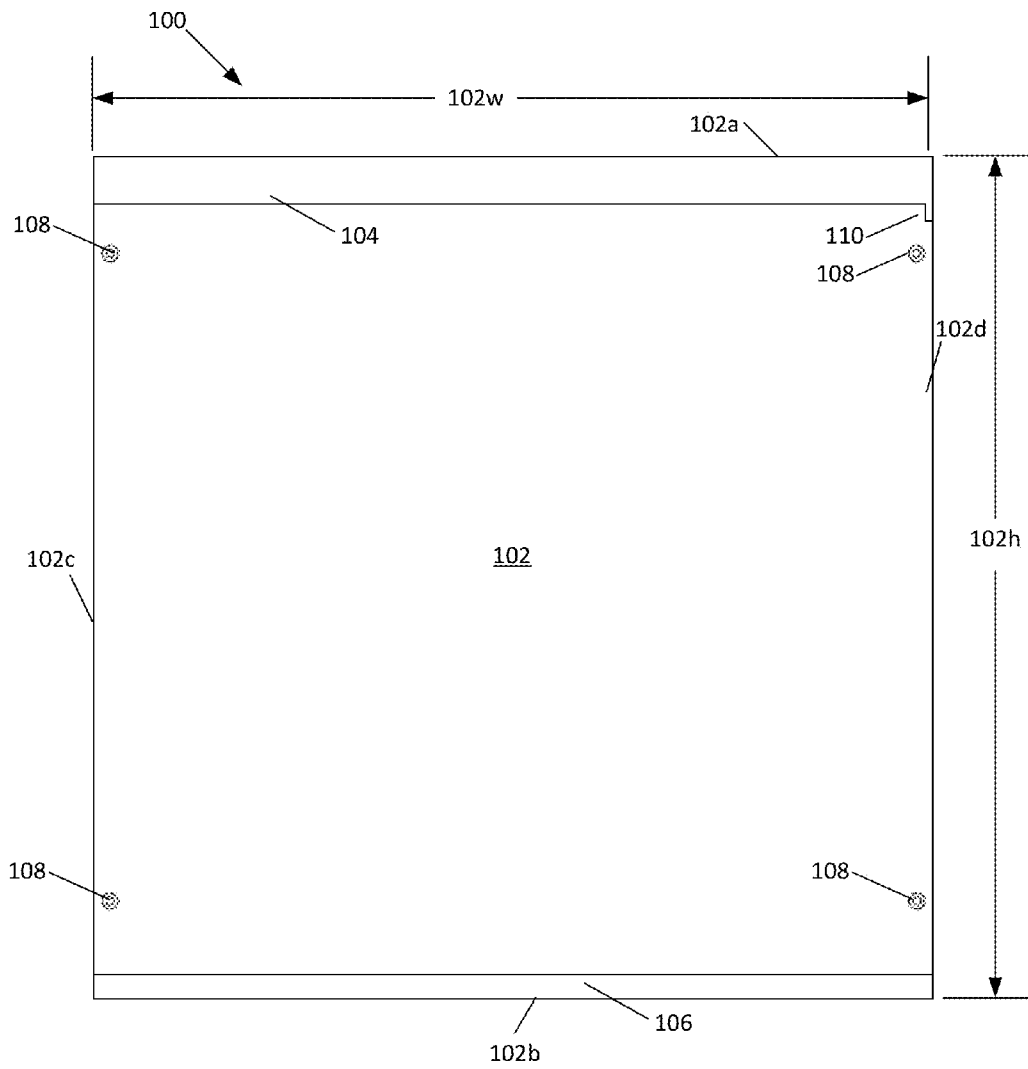


FIG. 13

100

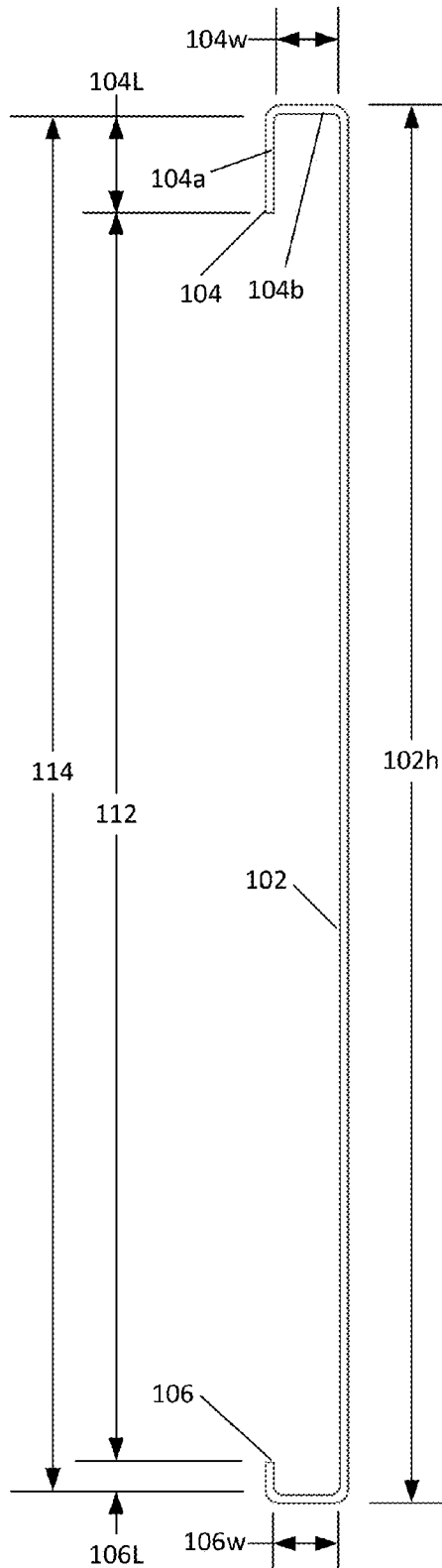


FIG. 14

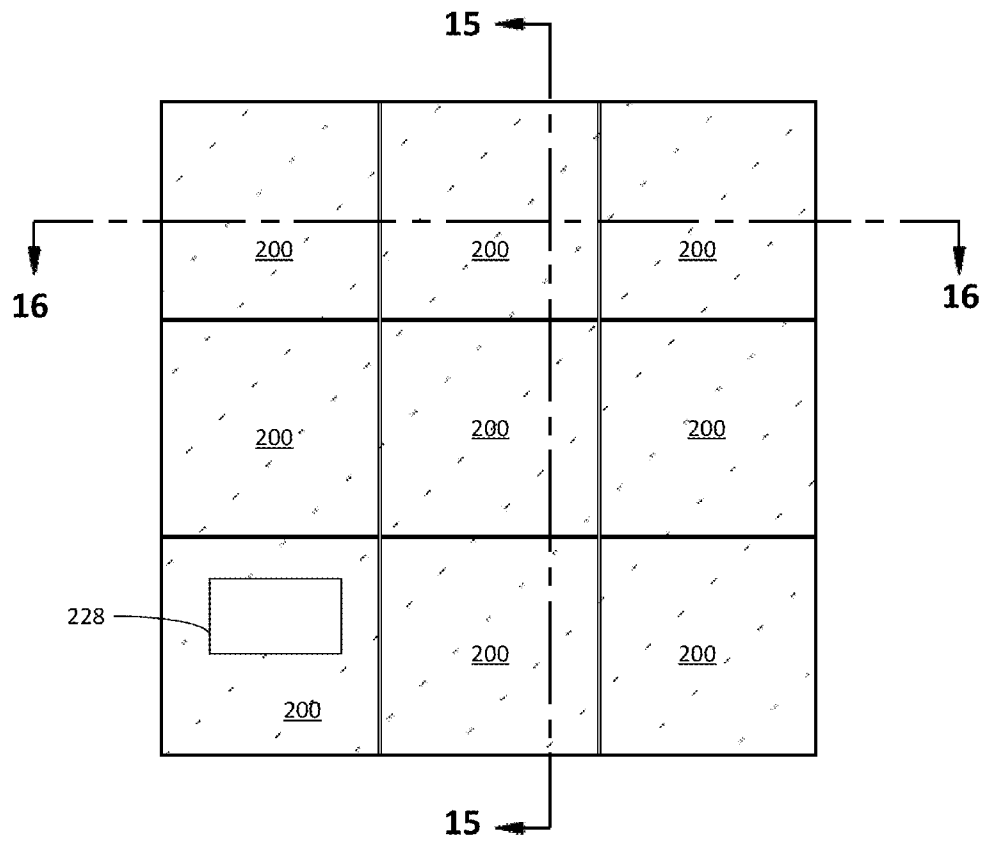


FIG. 15

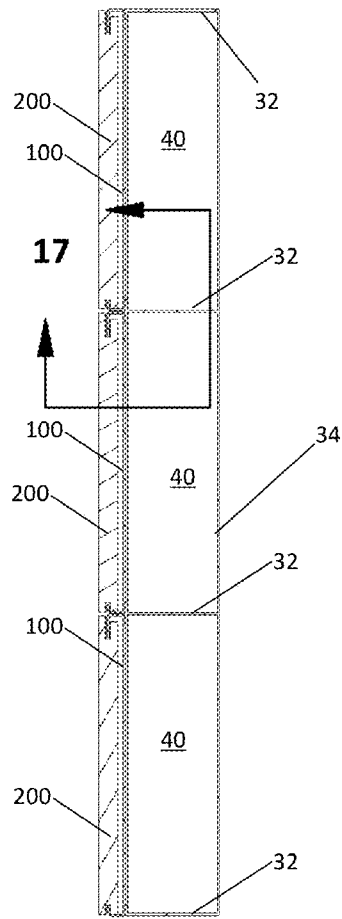


FIG. 16

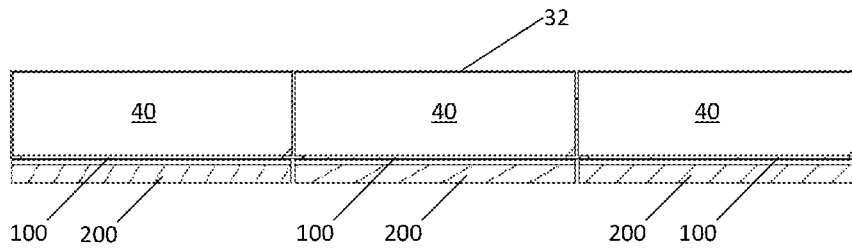


FIG. 18

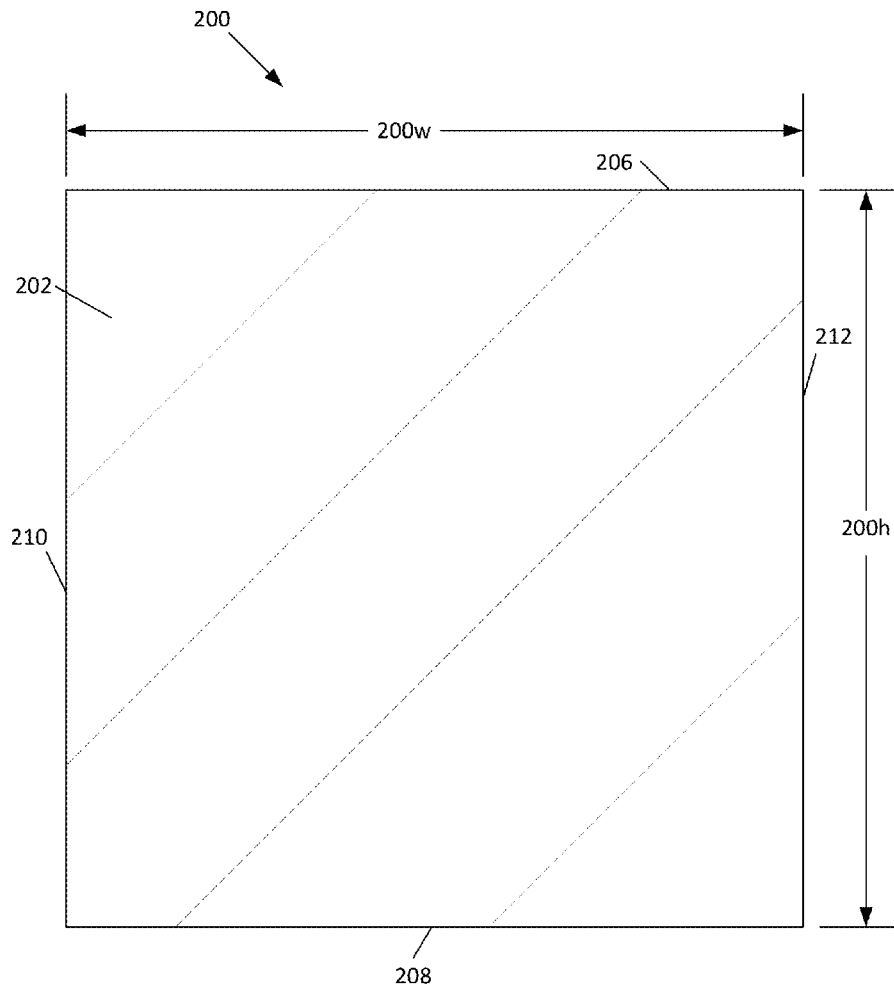
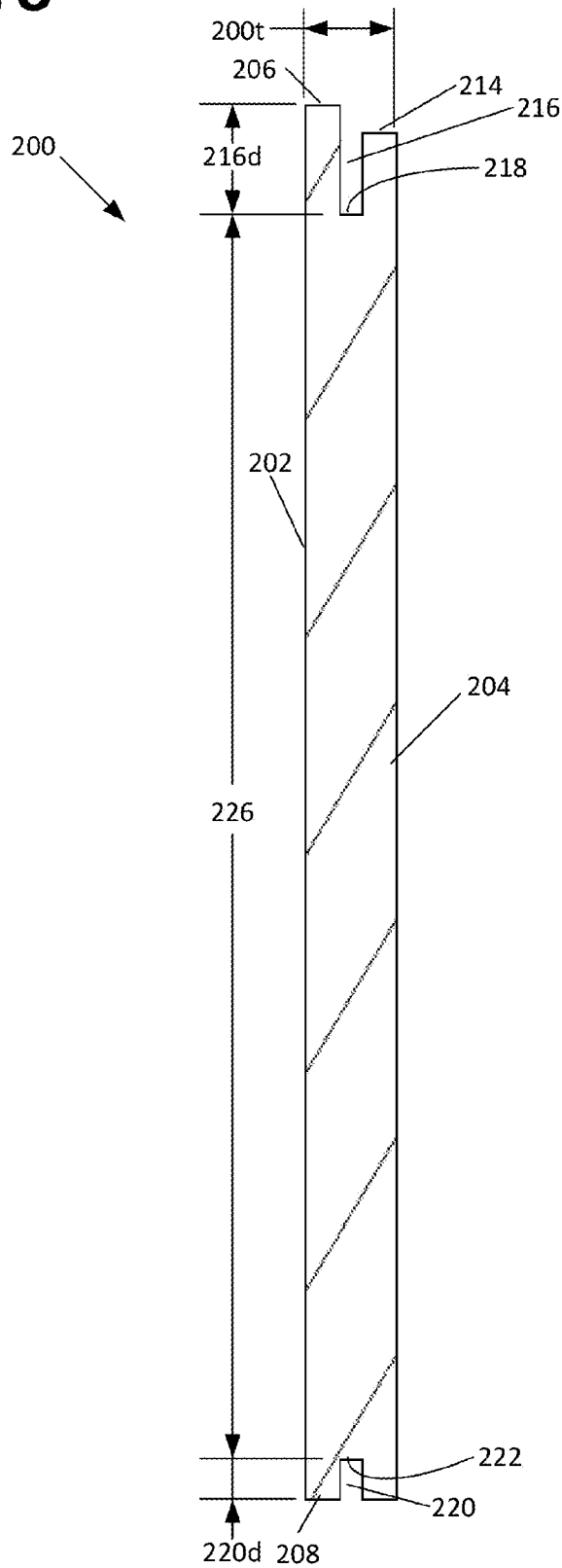


FIG. 19



1

CLOSURE SYSTEM FOR MEMORIAL PRODUCT

This application claims priority to U.S. Application Ser. No. 61/704,190 that was filed with the United States Patent and Trademark Office on Sep. 21, 2012. The entire disclosure of the U.S. Application Ser. No. 61/704,190 is incorporated herein by reference.

TECHNICAL FIELD

This disclosure relates to a closure system for a memorial product, such as a columbarium. Columbaria generally include one or more niches for storing cinerary urns. In some installations, removable covers or panels are provided for protecting and concealing the stored contents within a niche.

BACKGROUND

Columbaria, often constructed of marble or granite, are memorial products within which cinerary urns are stored in individual niches. Columbaria can be freestanding or part of another structure, such as a mausoleum. In some instances, the niches are viewable for public display. In other instances, especially in outdoor applications, the niches are sealed and closed such that the contents of the niche are protected. In some applications, each individual niche is provided with a separate closure that is mechanically secured to a structural portion of the columbarium. An additional cover may also be provided over the closure to ensure that the aesthetics of the columbaria are maintained. Such covers are sometimes secured to either the closure behind the cover or to a structural portion of the columbarium with additional mechanical fasteners, such as clips, bolts, screws, brackets, and other similar hardware that are not integral to the cover or the closure. In some applications, mechanical fasteners are concealed behind the covers such that they cannot be viewed from the exterior. Improvements are desired.

SUMMARY

A closure system for a memorial product, such as a columbarium, is disclosed. In one embodiment, the closure system is configured to be mounted to a niche compartment such that an opening of the niche compartment is covered. In one embodiment, the closure system includes a face plate hanger and a face plate. The face plate hanger may include a first rail provided at a first end of a niche compartment opening and a second rail provided at a second end, opposite the first end, of a niche compartment opening. The first and second rails may be generally directed towards each other. The face plate may be constructed to fit between the first rail and the second rail. In one embodiment, the face plate has a first channel constructed to receive the first rail and a second end comprising a second channel constructed to receive the second rail. The face plate hanger may also include a cover panel that is configured to cover the niche opening. A columbarium is also disclosed in which a cabinet structure is provided that defines a plurality of niche compartments wherein each of the compartments has an opening that is covered by the above described closure system.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Non-limiting and non-exhaustive embodiments are described with reference to the following figures, which are

2

not necessarily drawn to scale, wherein like reference numerals refer to like parts throughout the various views unless otherwise specified.

FIG. 1 is a front perspective view of a columbarium with a closure system having features that are examples of aspects in accordance with the principles of the present disclosure.

FIG. 2 is a front view of the columbarium and closure system of FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 is a front perspective view of a cabinet structure for use in a closure system having features that are examples of aspects in accordance with the principles of the present disclosure.

FIG. 4 is a front view of the cabinet structure of FIG. 3.

FIG. 5 is a cross-sectional view of the cabinet structure of FIG. 3, taken along the line 5-5.

FIG. 6 is a cross-sectional view of the cabinet structure of FIG. 3, taken along the line 6-6.

FIG. 7 is a front perspective view of the cabinet structure of FIG. 3 with closure panels installed.

FIG. 8 is an enlarged view of a portion of the cabinet and closure panels shown in FIG. 7 at location 8.

FIG. 9 is a front view of the cabinet and closure panels shown in FIG. 7.

FIG. 10 is a cross-sectional view of the cabinet structure and closure panels of FIG. 7, taken along the line 10-10.

FIG. 11 is a cross-sectional view of the cabinet structure and closure panels of FIG. 7, taken along the line 11-11.

FIG. 12 is a front view of one of the closure panels shown in FIG. 7.

FIG. 13 is a side view of the closure panel shown in FIG. 12.

FIG. 14 is a front view of an assembled closure system including face plates mounted onto the closure panels and cabinet of FIG. 7.

FIG. 15 is a cross-sectional view of the assembled closure system of FIG. 14, taken along the line 15-15.

FIG. 16 is a cross-sectional view of the assembled closure system of FIG. 14, taken along the line 16-16.

FIG. 17 is an enlarged view of a portion of the assembled closure system of FIG. 14 at location 17 indicated at FIG. 15.

FIG. 18 is a front view of one of the face plates shown in FIG. 14.

FIG. 19 is a side view of the face plate shown in FIG. 14.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Various embodiments will be described in detail with reference to the drawings, wherein like reference numerals represent like parts and assemblies throughout the several views. Reference to various embodiments does not limit the scope of the claims attached hereto. Additionally, any examples set forth in this specification are not intended to be limiting and merely set forth some of the many possible embodiments for the appended claims.

With reference to FIGS. 1-3, a columbarium 10 is shown. Columbarium 10 is for providing a plurality of individual niche compartments 40 for storing cinerary urns or the like. In the embodiment shown, columbarium 10 is free standing. However, in other embodiments, columbarium 10 may be part of another structure, such as a mausoleum. As shown, columbarium 10 is part of a granite structure having a front 14, a first side 16, and a second side 18. Other materials or a combination of materials may be used for columbarium 10, such as marble, limestone, sandstone, bronze, and other types of stone and metals. A plurality of individual niche compartments 40, covered by associated face plates 200 are provided on each of the front 14 and sides 16, 18. As shown, front 14

includes 20 niche compartments **40** and face plates **200** arranged in a 4×4 array and a lower 4×1 array. The first side **16** is shown as having **16** niche compartments **40** and face plates **200** arranged in a 4×4 array. The second side **18** has the same arrangement as the first side **16**. The rear side (not shown) of the columbarium **10** may also include arrangements similar to the front **14** or the sides **16**, **18**. As shown, the face plate **200** fields may be bounded on each side by additional columbarium structures, such as sides **14a**, **14b**, **14c**, and **14d** for the 4×4 field on the front **14**. It should be appreciated that the columbarium can have any number of sides (such as one, two, three, four, five, six, etc.) and each side can contain any size array of niche compartments and face plates. Any side containing an array can be provided as straight or curved.

Referring to FIGS. 3-6, a cabinet structure **30** for installation into the columbarium **10** is shown. The cabinet structure **30** may be provided within the columbarium **10** to define the individual niche compartments **40**. In one embodiment, cabinet structure **30** is provided with a plurality of horizontal members **32** and a plurality of vertical members **34**. The cabinet structure **30** can also be provided with a front face **30a** and a backing (not shown). A backing could be provided by some other portion of the columbarium structure. The front face **30a** can be integral to the horizontal and vertical member **32**, **34**, or could be a separate component attached to the horizontal and vertical members **32**, **34**. Together, the horizontal members **32**, the vertical members **34**, and the backing if provided, form a plurality of niche compartments **40**, each of which defines an opening **40a** at the front face **30a** of the cabinet structure **30**. As shown, each opening **40a** has a height **40h** and a width **40w**. In one embodiment, opening **40a** is a rectangular opening (for example, square) wherein **40h** is about 12 inches and width **40w** is about 12 inches. Other dimensions and shapes are also possible.

As shown, cabinet structure **30** has four horizontal members **32** and four vertical members **34** that define nine individual niche compartments **40** in a 3×3 configuration. It is to be understood that cabinet structure **30** could be configured to define any number of niches in any particular pattern or array. For example, referring to FIGS. 1 and 2, columbarium **10** is provided with a 4×4 frame structure on each of two sides **16**, **18** and a front **14**, and an additional 4×1 frame structure on the front **14**.

The front face **40a** of the cabinet structure **30** may also be provided with a plurality of mounting holes **38** for receiving mounting screws that retain face plate hangers **100** (discussed later). In the embodiments shown, four mounting holes **38** are shown for each niche compartment **40** location. It is also noted that, to accommodate mounting of the face plate hangers **100** and face plates **200**, the faces of the interior horizontal and vertical members **32**, **34** are shown as having a greater width than the faces of the horizontal and vertical members **32**, **34** that form the perimeter of the cabinet structure **30**.

Referring to FIGS. 7-13, the face plate hanger **100** system is shown in greater detail. Face plate hanger **100** is for supporting the face plates **200**, and can also be used for sealing or concealing the opening **40a** of the niche compartment(s) **40**. As shown, in FIGS. 7 and 9, a face plate hanger **100** is provided for each niche compartment **40**. However, in other embodiments, a face plate hanger **100** can be provided for multiple niche compartments **40**.

In the embodiment shown, face plate hanger **100** includes a closure panel **102** and a rail arrangement having a first rail **104** and a second rail **106**. The closure panel **102** has a width **102w** and a height **102h**. In one embodiment, width **102w** is greater than the niche compartment opening width **40w** and height **102h** is greater than the niche compartment opening

height **40h**. For example, in the embodiment shown, opening width **40w** and height **40h** are each about 12 inches and width **102w** and height **102h** are about 13 inches. In such an example, the closure panel **102** has a surface area that is greater than the area defined by the opening width **40w** and height **40h**.

As shown, the first rail **104** is arranged at a first end **102a** of the closure panel **102** and extends between a first side **102c** and a second side **102d** of the closure panel **102**. As shown, the second rail **106** is arranged at a second opposite end **102b** of the closure panel **102** and extending between a first side **102c** and a second side **102d** of the closure panel **102**. The closure panel may also be provided with mounting holes **108**, shown as aligning with mounting holes **38** on the cabinet structure, for mounting the face plate hanger **100** to the cabinet structure **30**.

Although a closure panel **102** is shown, it is to be understood that face plate hanger **100** could be provided without a closure panel **102** wherein the first rail **104** and the second rail **106** of the rail arrangement are mounted directly to the cabinet structure **40** or to another structural portion of the columbarium **10**. Additionally, the face plate hanger **100** system may be configured to provide a first rail **104** at the top horizontal member **32** of the cabinet **30** structure, a combined first rail **104** and second rail **106** component for the intermediate horizontal members **32**, and a second rail **106** at the bottom horizontal member **32**. The rails **104**, **106** may extend across a portion of the compartment **40**, extend across the general length of a single compartment **40**, extend the length of the entire cabinet structure **40**, or extend dimensions there between.

As most easily seen at FIGS. 12 and 13, the first rail **104** and the second rail **106** are generally directed towards each other such that the first rail **104** is directed towards the closure panel second end **102a** and the second rail **106** is directed to towards the closure panel first end **102b**. As shown, the first rail **104** may include a base portion **104b** and an extension member **104a** wherein the base portion **104b** extends generally perpendicularly away from the closure panel **102** and the extension member **104a** extends from the base portion **104b** in a direction towards the second end **102b** of the closure panel **102**. As shown, the second rail **106** may include a base portion **106b** and an extension member **106a** wherein the base portion **106b** extends generally perpendicularly away from the closure panel **102** and the extension member **106a** extends from the base portion **106b** in a direction towards the first end **102a** of the closure panel **102**. As shown, the first and second extension members **104a** are separated from the closure panel **102** a distance equal to the interior width (discussed below) of the base portions **104b**, **106b**, respectively.

As shown, the first extension member **104a** has a length **104L** and the second extension member **106a** has a length **106L**. As can be seen at FIG. 13, the distal ends of the extension members **104a**, **106a** that generally extend towards each other are separated by a distance **112**. In one embodiment, the first extension member length **104L** is about 0.75 inch, the second extension member length **106L** is about 0.375 inch, and the separating distance **112** is about 11.8 inches. While length **104L** is shown as being greater than length **106L**, the lengths may be the same, or length **106L** may be greater than **104L** in certain applications. However, it is preferable for length **106L** to be at a length such that the face plate **200** does not need to be lifted to an extensive degree in order to remove the face plate **200** from the frame hanger **100**.

As shown, the first extension member base portion **104a** has an interior width **104w** and the second extension member base portion **106a** has an interior width **106w**. As can be seen

at FIG. 13, the base portions **104a**, **106a** are separated by a distance **114**. In one embodiment, the first base portion width **104a** is about 0.5 inch, the second base portion interior width **106w** is about 0.8 inch, and the distance **112** between the base portions **104a**, **106a** is about 11.7 inches. While width **106w** is shown as being greater than width **104w**, the widths may be the same, or width **104w** may be greater than width **106w**. However, it is preferable for widths **104w** and **106w** to be of sufficient dimensions to allow the face plate **200** to be easily installed and removed from the frame hanger **100**.

The first rail **104** may also be provided with a retaining tab **110** for securing the face plate **200** to the frame hanger **100** in a retained position. As most easily seen, retaining tab **110** extends from the first extension member **104a** towards the second rail or the second end **102b** of the closure panel. In the particular embodiment shown, retaining tab **110** extends at least about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch, and preferably about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the edge of the first extension member **104a** opposite the base **104b**. Retaining tab **110** functions to decrease the opening distance **112** at the location of the tab **110** such that, when the face plate **200** is engaged with the retaining tab, insufficient clearance exists for the face plate to be lifted out and disengaged with the second rail. When the face plate **200** is not engaged with the retaining tab **110** in a lift-out position, the face plate **200** can be lifted up and disengaged from the second rail **106**.

Referring to FIGS. 14-19, the face plate **200** and the assembled closure system are shown in greater detail. As most easily seen at FIGS. 14 and 17, the face plates **200** are mounted to the face plate hangers **100** and arranged such that the sides of adjacent face plates **200** are separated from each other by a distance **224**. In one embodiment, distance **224** is about 0.375 inch. Distance **224** may be less than 0.375 inch, for example 0.125 inch, however removal of the face plate **200** becomes more difficult with reduced clearance. Distance **224** may be greater than 0.375 inch, however, as distance **224** increases the materials behind face plates (e.g. the face plate hangers **100** and granite structure there between) are more visible.

As can be seen at FIG. 14, the face plates **200** may be provided with a mounting or indicia **228**. The mounting or indicia **228** can be an engraving directly on the face panel **200** or provided as a cast product, for example a cast product having a photographic relief image therein. Casts products containing a photographic relief image therein can be prepared according to U.S. Patent Publication 2008/0148539 to Sheperd et al. The entire disclosure of U.S. Patent Publication 2008/0148539 to Sheperd et al. is incorporated herein by reference.

As shown, each face plate **200** has a height **200h** extending between a first edge **206** and a second edge **208**, a width **200w** extending between a third edge **210** and a fourth edge **212**, and a thickness **200t** extending between a front face **202** and a rear face **204**. In one embodiment, such as the shown embodiment, the face plate has a square shape wherein height **200h** and width **200w** are about 12.8 inches and has a thickness of about 0.8 inches. In one embodiment, such as the shown embodiment, the front face **202** is about $1\frac{1}{8}$ inches from the front face **30a** of the cabinet structure. Accordingly, the resulting surface area of the face plate **200** is only slightly less than that of the closure panel **102** and thus conceals a majority of the closure panel **102** surface area and fully conceals the mounting holes **138**.

Referring to FIGS. 17 and 19, the face plate **200** is shown as including a first channel **216** and a second channel **220**. The first channel **216** is for engaging a portion of the first rail **104**, for example the first rail extension member **104a** while the

second channel **220** is for engaging a portion of the second rail **106**, for example the second rail extension member **106a**.

As shown, first channel **216** has a width of about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch that is the same as or greater than a thickness of the first rail extension member **104a**, and a depth **216d** defined between the front face first edge **206** and a first channel base **218**. In one embodiment, such as the shown embodiment, depth **216d** is about 1 inch. At the location of the first channel **216**, the face plate **200** may be provided with a rabbit or cutaway portion **214** at the first edge to allow for easier removal and installation of the face plate **200**. As shown, the cutaway portion **214** has about 0.25 inch of material removed from the rear face **204**. As shown, second channel **220** has a width of about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch that is the same as or greater than a thickness of the second rail extension member **106a**, and a depth **220d** defined between the front face second edge **208** and a second channel base **220**. In one embodiment, such as the shown embodiment, depth **220d** is about 0.375 inch which is slightly greater than the length of the second rail extension member **106a** thereby allowing the second edge **208** of the face plate **200** to rest against the second rail base **106b** when the face plate **200** is installed. As can be seen at FIG. 19, the channel bases **218**, **222** are separated by a distance **224**.

To install the face plate hanger **100** to cabinet structure **30** (or another structure within columbarium **10**), the mounting holes **108** on the hanger **100** are aligned with the mounting holes **38** on the cabinet structure. Subsequently, fasteners such as screws, anchors, and/or bolts are used to secure the face plate hanger **100**. Where it is desired to seal the opening **40a** of the niche, a cover panel **102** can be provided as part of face plate hanger **100** and a sealant, such as caulk or an adhesive, may be provided between the cover panel **102** and cabinet front face **30a**.

To install a face plate **200** onto the face plate hanger **100**, the face plate **200** is first presented at an angle to the face plate hanger **100** such that the face plate second edge **208** is farther away from the hanger **100** than is the face plate first edge **206**. The face plate **200** is also aligned to be laterally offset from the first rail retaining tab **110**. The face plate first channel **216** is then aligned with the hanger first rail **104** and lifted upwards such that a portion of the first rail **104** (e.g. first extension member **104a**) is received within the first channel **216**, and such that the face plate second edge **208** is at a higher elevation than the second rail **106**. The face plate second edge **208** is then moved towards the hanger **100** and aligned with the second rail **106** such that the face plate second channel **220** can receive a portion of the hanger second rail **106** (e.g. the second extension member **106a**). The face plate **200** is then lowered with the second channel **220** receiving the second rail **106** until a portion of the face plate **200** rests upon a portion of the second rail **106** (e.g. the second edge **208** rests on second rail base **106b**). The face plate **200** is now engaged by both the first and second rails **104**, **106** and is retained by gravity such that it is not removable from the face plate hanger **100** without first lifting the face plate **200** in an upward direction. This position may be referred to as a "lift-out position."

To place the face plate **200** in a "retained position" wherein the face plate **200** is prevented from being lifted in an upward direction such that it could be removed from the face plate hanger **100**, the face plate is slid laterally on the rails until the retaining tab **110** is engaged within the face plate first channel **216**. As the distance **112** between the rails at the location of the retaining tab is very close to the distance **224** between the first and second channel bases **218**, **222** (i.e. the difference between distances **224** and **112** is less than the second extension member length **106L**), the face plate **200** has insufficient

clearance to lift out of the face plate hanger **100** without first being laterally offset away from the retaining tab **110**. The removal of the face plate **200** from the hanger **100** is the reverse of the above described installation procedure.

The above described lifting procedure may be performed manually with or without tools. One tool usable to aid in lifting the face plate **200** is a suction cup tool that can create a vacuum to hold the face plate **200** and a handle for a person to better manipulate the face plate **200**.

However, a person may use his/her fingers alone to remove the panel where distance **224** is sufficiently sized. It has been found that a dimension of $\frac{3}{16}$ inch is sufficient for manual removal of the face plate **200** without tools of any kind.

It is also noted that the entire installation and removal process of the face plate **200** with respect to the face plate hanger **100** is performed without damaging the face plate **200** or adjacent structures in any way. As such, the term "removable," as used herein, is taken to mean a process in which the face plate **200** can be separated from the face plate hanger **100** with all structures of the face plate **200** fully intact. It is further noted that the face plate **200** is secured to the face plate hanger **100** in both the lift-out position and the retained position without the use of any type of separate fasteners. Non-limiting examples of fasteners include screws, bolts, nuts, anchors, adhesives, sealants, tape, caulk, clips, and brackets that are not integral to the structure of the face plate **200**.

The cabinet structure **30**, the face plate hanger **100**, and the face plate **200** may be constructed from a variety of materials. For example, these components may be wood, plastic, stone, metal, and/or a combination of such materials. Non-limiting examples of metal materials are steel, cast iron, aluminum, bronze, and other metals commonly used for memorial products. Examples of stone materials are granite, limestone, sandstone, and marble. In one embodiment, the cabinet structure **30** and the face plate hangers **100** are constructed from a metal material while the face plate **200** is constructed from a stone material. In the embodiment shown, the cabinet structure **30** and the face plate hangers **100** are constructed from aluminum while the face plate **200** is constructed from granite. It is also noted that the disclosed face plate **200** and face plate hanger **100** are each shown as being a single-piece, unitary structure made from a single material.

Now referring to FIG. 3, an exemplary cinerary urn containing the ashes of a cremated person is illustrated at reference number **300**. It should be appreciated that the columbarium can contain a cinerary urn **300** in any of the plurality of individual niche compartments **40**. In addition, the depth of the niche compartments can be provided so that they have any desired depth sufficient to accommodate the cinerary urns contemplated for storage in the columbarium. In addition, the cinerary urn **300** can be considered an object **300** for storage in the array. Exemplary objects for storage include personal objects and memorial objects.

Although specific embodiments have been illustrated and described herein, it will be appreciated by those of ordinary skill in the art that a variety of alternative and/or equivalent implementations may be substituted for the specific embodiments shown and described without departing from the scope of the present disclosure. Furthermore, although the closure system is described for a memorial product, such as a columbarium, the closure system is not limited to only such applications and has utility for other applications where removable panels are desired. Additionally, although a complete columbarium structure is shown and described, it is noted that the disclosed closure system including face plates and face plate hangers may be applied in a retrofit application on an existing columbarium or other structure (e.g. the conversion of a crypt

into a columbarium) where openings are desired to be covered. The application is intended to cover any adaptations or variations of the specific embodiments discussed herein. Therefore, it is intended that this invention be limited only by the claims and the equivalents thereof.

We claim:

1. A closure system for a niche compartment comprising:
 - (a) a face plate hanger including a rail arrangement comprising:
 - i. a first rail provided at a first end of a niche compartment opening;
 - ii. a second rail provided at a second end of a niche compartment opening, the second end being opposite the first end;
 - iii. wherein the first rail and the second rail are generally directed towards each other; and
 - (b) a face plate constructed to extend from the first rail to the second rail, the face plate comprising:
 - i. a first end comprising a first channel constructed to receive the first rail;
 - ii. a second end comprising a second channel constructed to receive the second rail;
 - iii. wherein the first rail has a first base member and a first extension with a first edge opposite the first base member and the second rail has a second base member and a second extension, wherein the first and second extensions are generally directed towards each other;
 - iv. wherein the first rail further comprises a retaining tab for securing the face plate to the face plate hanger in a retained position wherein the retaining tab extends beyond the first edge of the first extension;
 - v. wherein the retaining tab is integral to the first rail and extends at least 0.125 inch from the first edge;
 - vi. wherein the face plate is slidable relative to the face plate hanger from a lift-out position to the retained position:
 - (A) the lift-out position being a position in which the retaining tab is not received in the face plate first channel thereby allowing the face plate to be lifted in a direction towards the top rail and removed from the closure panel;
 - (B) the retained position being a position in which the retaining tab is received in the first channel such that the face plate cannot be lifted in a direction towards the first rail and removed from the closure panel.
2. The closure system of claim 1, wherein the face plate hanger further comprises:
 - (a) a closure panel configured to cover the niche opening, the closure panel extending between the first rail and the second rail.
3. The closure system of claim 1, wherein the first extension is longer than the second extension.
4. The closure system of claim 1, wherein the face plate is held in the retained position without mechanical fasteners separate from the first and second rails.
5. The closure system of claim 1, wherein the face plate has a first face having a height that is equal to or greater than a distance between the first and second rail base members.
6. The closure system of claim 5, wherein the face plate has a second face having a height that is less than the height of the first face.
7. The closure system of claim 2, wherein the closure panel is provided with mounting holes.

9

8. The closure system of claim 7, wherein the face plate covers the mounting holes when the face plate is secured to the closure panel.

9. The closure system of claim 1, wherein the face plate hanger is a metal material.

10. The closure system of claim 9, wherein the closure panel is aluminum.

11. The closure system of claim 1, wherein the face plate is a stone material.

12. The closure system of claim 11, wherein the face plate is granite.

13. The closure system of claim 1, wherein the face plate is a metal material.

14. The closure system of claim 13, wherein the face plate is bronze.

15. The closure system of claim 1, wherein the face plate hanger is aluminum and the face plate is granite.

16. A columbarium comprising:

(a) at least one cabinet structure defining a plurality of individual niche compartments, wherein each individual niche compartment has an opening that is concealed by the closure system of claim 1.

17. The columbarium of claim 16, wherein the first and second rails are attached to the cabinet structure by mechanical fasteners.

18. The columbarium of claim 16, wherein the first rail further comprises a retaining tab for securing each face plate to each face plate hanger in a retained position.

19. The columbarium of claim 18, wherein the retaining tab has a width that is less than a distance between adjacent face plates when the face plates are in the retained position.

20. The columbarium of claim 16, wherein the cabinet structure defines at least four individual niche compartments.

21. A closure system for a niche compartment comprising:

(a) a face plate hanger including a closure panel for covering an opening of the niche compartment and a rail arrangement comprising:

i. a first rail provided at a first end of the closure panel;

ii. a second rail provided at a second end of the closure panel, the second end being opposite the first end;

iii. wherein the first rail and the second rail are generally directed towards each other; and

(b) a face plate constructed to fit between the first rail and the second rail, the face plate comprising:

i. a first end comprising a first channel constructed to receive the first rail;

ii. a second end comprising a second channel constructed to receive the second rail;

10

iii. wherein the first rail has a first base member and a first extension with a first edge opposite the first base member and the second rail has a second base member and a second extension, wherein the first and second extensions are generally directed towards each other;

iv. wherein the first rail further comprises a retaining tab for securing the face plate to the face plate hanger in a retained position wherein the retaining tab extends beyond the first edge of the first extension;

v. wherein the retaining tab is integral to the first rail and extends at least 0.125 inch from the first edge;

vi. wherein the face plate is slidable relative to the face plate hanger from a lift-out position to the retained position:

(A) the lift-out position being a position in which the retaining tab is not received in the face plate first channel thereby allowing the face plate to be lifted in a direction towards the top rail and removed from the closure panel;

(B) the retained position being a position in which the retaining tab is received in the first channel such that the face plate cannot be lifted in a direction towards the first rail and removed from the closure panel.

22. The closure system of claim 21 wherein the face plate second end rests upon a base of the second rail when the face plate is engaged with the face plate hanger.

23. A columbarium comprising:

(a) at least one cabinet structure defining a plurality of individual niche compartments, wherein each individual niche compartment has an opening that is concealed by the closure system of claim 19.

24. The columbarium of claim 23, wherein the cabinet structure defines at least nine individual niche compartments, each individual niche compartment having an adjacent face panel.

25. The columbarium of claim 24, wherein the adjacent face panels have a first spacing of at least 0.125 inch between sides of adjacent face panels.

26. The columbarium of claim 25, wherein the first spacing is about $\frac{3}{16}$ inch.

27. The columbarium of claim 23, further comprising a plurality of cinerary urns wherein each cinerary is stored in a separate one of the plurality of individual niche compartments.

* * * * *